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RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 1206  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0440  
RUEHBH/AMEMBASSY NASSAU 2566  
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 0934  
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 3954  
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 1038  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 001172

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/06/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [GY](#)

SUBJECT: POLICE COMMISSIONER GREENE: GIVE US BARABBAS

REF: A. (A) GEORGETOWN 00725

[1](#)B. GEORGETOWN 00708

[1](#)C. (C) STATE 118421

Classified By: Ambassador David M. Robinson, Reason 1.5(b)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: President Bharrat Jagdeo appears set to make Acting Police Commissioner Henry Greene the permanent head of the Guyana Police Force. Elevating Greene makes political sense--his aggressive response to out of control street crime is a hit--but the president fears it may cause problems with the donor community. We will continue to raise our concerns about Greene's links to criminal enterprises (ref A), but do not expect Jagdeo to abandon his popular crime chief. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Henry Greene's tenure as acting police commissioner will end statutorily in the next few days. He temporarily replaced retiring Winston Felix in July and quickly gained credibility among politicians and the public for delivering violence-free elections on August 28 and for hunting down known criminals, always with fatal results, ever since. Jagdeo and Private Sector Commission head Michael Correia separately told the Ambassador that Greene's aggressive style is effective, making him the obvious permanent successor to Felix. Media reports universally echo that view. The Ambassador and his British and Canadian counterparts have repeatedly reminded the president and other officials that Greene has unsavory ties and that shooting criminals does not substitute for solid police work. In this wild west atmosphere, however, the only good criminal is a dead criminal.

[1](#)3. (C) The GoG's unofficial newspaper, the Guyana Chronicle, ran editorials on November 5 extolling Greene's three-month performance as interim chief and called his violent crackdown welcome and overdue. Each dead suspect is subsequently linked to a number of previously unsolved attacks, with or without supporting evidence, boosting the perception of police effectiveness. The Chronicle also reported the same day Jagdeo's complaint about "rumors" being used to smear Greene and other public officials. The remark likely refers to Greene's US visa revocation the same day he was announced as acting commissioner (refs B and C). Jagdeo and his closest advisor, Roger Luncheon, frequently complain that the Embassy has failed to substantiate its allegation that Greene benefits from criminal enterprises. We have briefed the president in general (ref A), but will not share sensitive law enforcement information that surely will be compromised.

¶4. (C) Despite Greene's popularity, expected negative donor reaction gives Jagdeo second thoughts about simply making the commissioner's appointment permanent. The president wants UK and IDB security sector reform proposals implemented on his terms--more equipment, less training--and he wants DEA assets in Guyana. Rather than risking direct confrontation over Greene, Jagdeo likely is using the press to cast the decision as a response to public demand rather than as a reflection of his own preference. Wanting it both ways is a hallmark of this administration. The Ambassador and his counterparts from the British and Canadian High Commissions will continue to voice concern about Greene's suitability, but their appeals are unlikely at this point to sway Jagdeo from taking the popular course.

¶5. (C) Comment: Henry Greene is corrupt but he is more effective than his predecessor in controlling the streets. The president is happy in the role of Pontius Pilate and is betting that the donors ultimately will work out some accommodation with the commissioner. He is probably right. We will not rehabilitate Greene, but we will have to cooperate with his police force if he becomes permanent.

ROBINSON